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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E. O. 11652: N/A
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SKIJ: DC NATIONAL COUNCIL REJECTS ANY CHANGE IN POLITICAL
BALANCE PROVIDED BY ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI EMERGED REINFORCED
FROM THE THREE-DAY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC) NATIONAL COUNCIL
SESSION WHICH CONCLUDED DEC. 12. THE PARTY FIRMLY REJECTED
ANY CHANGE IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL BALANCE (NEITHER THE
"NEW STEPS" SOUGHT BY THE PCI NOR THE HARDENED POLITICAL
CONFRONTATION DESIRED BY SOME DC "ACTIVISTS"). IT WILL
CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF "CONFRONTO" OR DIALOG AIMED
AT THE EVENTUAL REFORMATION OF LINKS WITH THE SOCIALISTS
AND LAY PARTIES. ZACCAGNINI'S STRONG CRITICISM OF THE
NEW REFORM MOVEMENTS FOR SEEKING TO ALTER THE DC'S
TRADITIONAL "POPULIST" AND CLASSLESS COMPLEXION IN FAVOR
OF A MORE MODERN, MIDDLE-CLASS ORIENTATION REVEALED BASIC
CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES OVER THE DIRECTION WHICH PARTY
RENEWAL SHOULD TAKE. END SUMMARY. 1. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS BE-
FORE THE DC'S NATIONAL
COUNCIL WERE ANSWERED EVEN BEFORE THE SESSION BEGAN.
IT WAS MORO, IN AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED ON THE MORNING
THE COUNCIL OPENED, WHO SET THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
FOR THE SESSION (ROME 20145) BY FIRMS REJECTING CALLS
FROM BOTH THE PCI AND "ACTIVISTS" IN THE DC FOR
CHANGES IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL BALANCE. IN HIS TWO-
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HOUR ADDRESS WHICH WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED, PARTY

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SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI REITERATED AND DEVELOPED MORO'S
THEMES IN MORE CONCRETE TERMS.
2. LIKE MORO, ZACCAGNINI REJECTED ANY MODIFICATION
OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK TOWARD THE HISTORIC
COMPROMISE OR FORMATION OF AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT.
ZACCAGNINI'S NEGATIVE REPLY TO BERLINGUER'S RECENT
DEMAND FOR "NEW STEPS" LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE
ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT REPGWSENTED THE FURTHEST ACCEPTABLE
LIMIT TO THE DC. IN SIMILARLY CATEGORIC LANGUAGE,
ZACCAGNINI ALSO SECONDED MORO IN REJECTING THE POLICY
OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION ("SCONTRO") WHICH HAD
RECENTLY BEEN ADVANCED BY SOME DC MODERATES. ZACCAGNIN
ASSERTED THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT THE ANDREOTTI
GOVERNMENT AND PRECIPITATE EARLY ELECTIONS WOULD BE
HIGHLY DANGEROUS AND "HISTORICALLY RETOROGRESSIVE."

3. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT MENTION DE CAROLIS OR AGNELLI
BY NAME, ZACCAGNINI SPOKE OUT STRONGLY AGAINST "PERSONAL
INITIATIVES" WHICH SEEK TO CONVERT THE DC
INTO A CONSERVATIVE PARTY OR ONE NARROWLY PATTERNED
AFTER THE "GISCARDIAN-MODERATE" MODEL. ZACCAGNINI
SAID THAT THESE EFFORTS DANGEROUSLY ENCOURAGE POLITICAL
POLARIZATION. MOREOVER, THEYRETRAY THE ESSENTIAL
NATURE OF THE DC WHICH, ZACCAGNINI AFFIRMED, IS AND
MUST REMAIN "POPULISTS AND CLASSLESS." THE DC
LEADER WARNED THAT THOSE WHO WISHED TO TRANSFORM THE DC INTO A "PARTY
OF OPINION" (DE CAROLIS AND
MONTANELLI'S IL GIORNALE) MIGHT ACTUALLY BE "CONCEALING
THEIR INTENTION SURREPTITIOUSLY TO CHANGE THE NATURE
OF OUR PARTY." (COMMENT: HAVING BEEN PERSONALLY
ATTACKED EARLIER IN THE WEEK BY BERLINGUER, MONTANELLI
CAN NOW CLAIM THE DISTINCTION OF BEING THE OBJECT OF ZACCAGNINI'S
CRITICISM AS WELL). ZACCAGNINI ALSO
HAD FEW KIND WORDS FOR BORRUSO'S COMMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE
WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS WELL-INTENTIONED BUT
MISDIRECTED IN ITS INTEGRAL, CONFESSIONAL APPROACH.

4. COMMENT: ZACCAGNINI'S STRONG CRITICISM OF THE NEW
REFORM MOVEMENTS (FROM DE CAROLIS THROUGH AGNELLLI TO BORRUSO) REVEALS
A BASIC AND PERHAPS INSURMOUNTABLE
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ANTAGONISM. ZACCAGNINI CONCEIVES OF REFORM IN TERMS
OF ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL THAT DOES NOT ALTER THE
PARTY'S TRADITIONAL POPULIST ORIENTATION. THE REFORMERS, HOW-
EVER, ALL PERCEIVE OF RENEWAL IN TERMS OF CONVERTING THE
DC INTO SOMETHING ELSE. SINCE THESE MOVEMENTS DERIVE
SUPVLRT FQM THEIR CLOSE TIES WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE
ELECTORATES, THEY ALL SEEK A DIFFERENT DC--BE IT A PARTY
OF CONSERVATISM, BUSINESS OR CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION.

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THE COUNCIL DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PARTY HAS NOT YET
RESOLVED THE BASIC QUESTION OF WHETHER THE DC CAN FIND
A PLACE FOR A DE CAROLIS, AN AGNELLI, OR A BORRUSO,
EXCEPT FOR ELECTIONS WHEN DC VOTES ARE NEEDED. END
COMMENT.

5. ZACCAGNINI SAID THAT THE PARTY'S RENEWAL SHOULD
BEGIN WITH A "RECONSTITUTION" OF THE DC'S DIRECTORATE
BY APPLYING THE CONTROVERSIAL "COMPATIBILITY RULE"
AGAINST SIMULTANEOUS HOLDING OF BOTH HIGH GOVERNMENT
AND PARTY POSITIONS. ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF DIRECTORATE
MEMBERS WERE REPLACED (RETAINING THE SAME FACTIONAL
BALANCE), THE FORZE NUOVE FACTION HELD OUT AGAINST
APPLYING THE REFORM RULE WHICH WOULD HAVE FORCED
DONAT CATTIN TOCHOOSE BETWN A PARTY AND GOVERNMENT
(MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES) POST. THE ISSUE APPARENTLY
WILL NOW BE DEFERRED UNTIL THE FEBRUARY DC ORGANIZATIONAL
CONGRESS.

6. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF THE OPEN CRITICISM OF THE
ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT AND THE ZACREGNINI SECRETARIAT
FROM BOTH THE DC LEFT AND RIGHT IN RECENT WEEKS,
THE COUNCIL WAS NOTEWORTHY FOR THE DEGREE OF PARTY
UNITY IT DEMONSTRATED. A CONSENSUS DEVELOPED THAT THIS
IS NOT THE TIME TO FORCE A CHANGE IN EITHER THE PARTY
OR THE GOVERNMENT. MORO'S ARTICLE DASHED ANY HOPE
THAT THE PIVOTAL LEADER WAS READY TO INTERVENE IN CON-
CERT WITH DETRACTORS OF ANDREOTTI OR ZACCAGNINI.
FORLANI, WHO HAD APPEARED POISED TO RE-ENTER THE POLITICAL
FRAY ONLY A WEEK AGCN RETREATED CAUTIOUSLY TO
THE SIDELINES. ON THE DC'S LEFT, DONAT CATTIN'S FORCES
FOUND THEMSELVES NUMERICALLY OUTNUMBERED TO FORCE
ACCEPTANCE OF A DC-LEFT SECRETARIAT BASED ON THE "CONGRESS
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MAJORITY" WHICH HAD ELECTED ZACCAGNINI LAST MARCH.
THE MEETING'S EMPHASIS ON "UNIFIED" OR "COLLEGIAL"
LEADERSHIP IS INDICATIVE OF THE NEW STRENGTH OF THE
MODERATES, BUT IT ALSO SERVES TO UNIFY THE PARTY BY
ENGAGING ALL ELEMENTS IN ITS DIRECTION.

7. WITH THE PARTY UNIFIED AGAINST ANY CHANGE IN THE
PRESENT POLITICAL BALANCE, PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
RESULT OF THE COUNCIL IS THE REINFORCEMENT IT PROVIDED
TO ANDREOTTI'S POSITION. HAVING JUST OBTAINED BERLINGUER'S
FRESH APPROVAL AS THE ONLY GOVERNMENT POSSIBLE IN THE
PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, ANDREOTTI NOW HAS HIS PARTY'S
SIMILAR BACKHANDED ENDORSEMENT. POSITIVE SUPPORT IT MIGHT NOT BE.
HOWEVER, IT IS NONETHELESS THE KIND OF

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"NON NON-CONFIDENCE" THAT ANDREOTTI HAS USED SO SKILLFULLY
DURING THE LAST, PRECARIOUS FOUR MONTHS. ANDREOTTI
CAN NOW TACKLE THE TOUGH ECONOMICPROBLEMS HIS
GOVERNMENT MUST CONFRONT, ASSURED AT LEAST IN THE SHORT
TERM THAT HE WILL NOT BE UNDER POLITICAL ATTACK FROM
THE PCI OR FROM WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY.BEAUDRY

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